**Overview of the innovation**

The main aim of this project was to provide support for girls in lower secondary school to stay in school and continue to upper secondary school. A multi-pronged approach was developed to address the multiple challenges faced by girls that impact on their attendance, retention and achievement in secondary school. This approach incorporated [1] school-based mentoring, [2] the establishment of girls’ clubs, [3] saving and loan activities with associated training in financial management, and [4] a community score card allowing girls to participate in decision making. The project was implemented in 30 schools in three districts of Southern Province and a total of 239 teachers and 6,178 girls were involved in KGAS activities.

1,617 individual girls were supported with one-on-one sessions by mentors during the project’s life (which represented 107.8% of the project target). 3,433 girls participated in saving and loans activities, exceeding the initial the target of 2,500 girls. The pilot achieved cumulative savings between January 2014 and March 2015 of 10,859,445 RFW (GBP 10,816) with an average saving of 3,165 RFW (GBP 3.1) per girl. In addition, those cumulative savings generated 1,323,615 RFW (GBP 1,318) of retained earnings (returns on savings) which represented 12.1% of savings. 231 girls’ clubs in the 30 pilot schools evaluated school services using the School Score Card and voiced their needs and rights. Girls selected the domains of scoring, developed indicators, met with schools authorities to evaluate the quality, accessibility and availability of services and developed action plans to address the issues raised.

The total budget for this intervention was GBP 736,567.

**Grant Recipient:**
The project was implemented through a consortium of NGOs, led by CARE International with three local NGOS - AEE Rwanda, ARCT-Ruhuka and YWCA.

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**What makes it innovative?**
The project represents a new way of working in inclusive education by bringing together the distinct activities of saving and loans, score cards, girls’ clubs and mentoring as a holistic approach for addressing girls’ diverse challenges in attending and achieving well in secondary school.

**Relevance to education priorities:**
Main Theme: Inclusive education
Sub-theme: Skills development
The project addresses many of the priorities highlighted in the girls’ education policy and the first priority of the ESSP for improving completion and transition rates in basic education.

**Project learning (activity/output to outcomes level)**
- Mentorship, dealing with psycho-social issues of the girls, is a sensitive issue and not without risks. The awareness of the government on how to deal with a mentorship programme for girls and how to put adequate risks management mechanisms in place will be important
- Those responsible for Girls Education in MINEDUC are very enthusiastic about the KGAS project and its potential to have larger impact when taken to scale.

**Project outcomes and reflection on monitoring and evaluation**
The quasi-experimental design involved control and treatment schools investigated at baseline and end-line. However, the choice of schools and high attrition rates complicated the analysis
method. The prime indicator of outcome was the drop-out rate of girls, and also measures of their self-confidence and economic empowerment, and school environment in relation to girls’ learning and well-being. Qualitative and quantitative measures were used with school data on drop out and quantitative surveys for other measures, supported by semi-structured interviews.

While KGAS did not show a significant impact on drop-out (other factors, such as policy change, impacted the results for dropout rates). The evaluation suggests significant changes in girls’ attitudes towards financial management. The girls who participated in KGAS had an 18% higher probability of spending on education and a 34% higher probability of saving than those who had not participated in the programme (based on three different regression models). This is supported by insightful interview data which suggests that the clubs helped girls by increasing their confidence and developing peer relationships, with some finding the mentoring process one where they could share personal problems.

As indicated above there were problems with the study in terms of samples that necessitated a variety of models of analysis to be examined to determine impact and consequently strong conclusions were difficult to make. The study was nevertheless conducted very professionally and suitably cautious conclusions drawn. Although the transparency was very high and a serious attempt was made to examine threats to validity and reliability, including the use of existing instruments with published details, there were still some unexamined validity issues with the survey measures. The modest conclusions are justified both from the design and instruments issues noted here.
Conditions for success

The key conditions for success particularly focus on the mentoring programme which relied on appropriate resources and time being available. The mentors were unpaid and there was a perceived large commitment from the mentors to provide support for girls outside of normal school working hours, often with additional personal expenses (for example, travel).

An important aspect of the programme is that it provides a relatively intense support package at school level. This raises questions about long-term ownership and capacity among government stakeholders at the decentralised levels. The proposed scale-up model tries to deal with this by ‘simplifying’ the package, which is well justified. The importance of building ownership and capacity at these decentralised levels is an important condition for future successful scale up and sustainability.

Another crucial condition for success is to make the girls’ activities an integral part of school life, and as much as possible part of the school programme. There is a risk for the sustainability of the programme at scale-up if activities are only provided outside of school hours.

Scale up and sustainability considerations

The CARE scale-up plan provides a strong analysis of its proposed scale-up model. The basics of the pilot model will remain, but each of the components, (i) school scorecard, (ii) mentorship and (iii) savings/financial literacy, will become significantly less intense. Serious effort has been put into identifying a ‘minimum model’ that is still expected to work. The document could have been slightly stronger in explaining why the holistic approach needs to be kept – it is not clear why taking out one of the three elements of the model couldn’t lead to the same overall impact, even if it may feel ‘intuitively’ right to keep them all together.

In terms of the upsaling process, the steps (i) replication (ii) nation-wide scale up (iii) institutionalisation are very sensible. There is also a clear commitment to have full MINEDUC/REB leadership during scale up. How realistic it is to assume scale up will happen under MINEDUC leadership is questionable: the ‘how’ of nation-wide upsaling is not discussed in-depth, raising some questions about feasibility. More details are required about the CARE role during scale up, in terms of it coming alongside the GoR to build its capacity to manage the entire programme. It is not only about mentors being trained at the school level, but also about the system being able to manage the entire package, across various levels of government. The steps towards system readiness will need to be dealt with in greater detail, as well as the ways in which the various actors will be involved over time.

CARE secured scale-up funding to replicate the project in the remaining Districts in Southern Province, in effect the first of the three scale-up steps. This will help working further on the scale-up and sustainability issues identified in this document.
The long-term institutionalisation solution focuses on integration in the curriculum. This needs more analysis as just putting content in a curriculum, if possible, may not have the desired impact. It triggers a range of questions about the actual implementation of that curriculum, the roles of teachers and mentors, the required support structures, the need for capacity building, etc. Finally the scale-up plan suggests that MINEDUC/REB will employ and pay the proposed Master Trainers at District level, which will need further negotiations.

**Cost Considerations**

The economic analysis is clear and when the project will be scaled up and institutionalised at national scale it will represent enormous reduction in terms of costs per girl as expressed in the table below. Although a strong cost analysis was presented by CARE, this does raise the question whether, if costs go down by such a large amount, there are any risks of ‘diluted impact’ due to a lighter model, or whether it is right to assume similar levels of impact. This justifies the need for a more thorough analysis of unit costs in relation to anticipated outcomes of the new model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Current unit cost in £</th>
<th>Projected unit cost at Scale in £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training per mentor including costs of: on-job coaching; training of trainers and working tools; register for record keeping</td>
<td>544.89</td>
<td>33.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training per girls’ leaders</td>
<td>240.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/kit per club (cost per student)</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>26.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversight per school per year</td>
<td>1422.40</td>
<td>236.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation per school per year</td>
<td>1030.36</td>
<td>11.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, it is good that there is a focus on unit costs rather than on line item budgets. However, it would still be useful to get a better idea about the overall scale by presenting total amounts required for each phase of the next 5 years. A related issue is the need to quantify the implications for the GoR in terms of the budget allocations it will need to make, as well as the external funding needed. A strong element of the costs section is the ‘counterfactual’, i.e. the costs of not upscaling the intervention.

**Immediate Next Steps**

- CARE to discuss with MINEDUC about the proposed package and the ownership and willingness of the Ministry to scale this innovation up within GoR frameworks
- Provide enhanced analysis and clarity about which costs should be borne by which stakeholder. If the Ministry needs to make funding available, the implications of this will have to be very clear. If external funding is required, a strategy for attracting donor funds will be needed.
- Clarify CARE’s future role and develop a clear strategy with MINEDUC as to how the GoR can lead with CARE providing support and capacity building for the Ministry at central and decentralised levels. MINEDUC can thus be prepared to take over the management of the entire package. The good news is that CARE has secured alternative scale-up funding to replicate the innovation project in the remaining Districts in Southern Province and this will help develop a joint approach with MINEDUC.
- This project is very closely linked with DFID strategic priorities and DFID may consider ways to support the sustainability of this intervention.